

different programs would be set up, one in each state. Federal funding would be cut by 12% in the first year alone. Poor children would be lopped off programs in every state. Kids—who cannot lobby or vote—would have to compete for shrinking public funding against powerful special interests. Kids would lose. And health care costs would rise even higher to address the needs of more hungry children, *costs which could be avoided if food programs are not cut.*

### 3. PROPOSED CHANGES WOULD INCREASE THE NUMBER OF HUNGRY CHILDREN

Children will pay the price of shortsighted deficit reduction. Converting successful federal nutrition programs into reduced state grants will result in deep funding cuts—nearly \$31 billion by the year 2000. If the proposed Balanced Budget Amendment also passes, cuts will be even greater. In hard times, when tax revenues fall, there will be more hunger but less help.

Drastic changes in the nation's nutrition programs would make them insensitive to economic needs in a particular year. They would no longer insure that those in need could be protected. In fact, by their very nature proposed changes would not guarantee where assistance goes. And Congress could cut critical food programs further at any time.

"IF IT'S NOT BROKEN, DON'T FIX IT"

The nation's nutrition programs are cost-effective and target the truly needy. According to the General Accounting Office, one program alone (Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children) saves \$3.50 in special education and Medicaid costs for every prenatal \$1 invested. Other research shows that children who get a school meal perform better academically.

The existing programs work, and they work well. The only problem is that they are not reaching enough of those in need. Proposed changes would mean that they never will.

For the richest nation on earth to deny food to its own children is a shortsighted betrayal of our values and our future. It is also unnecessary. In the name of our nation and its children, we call upon reason to prevail in Congress.

□ 2300

### IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN'S NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McHUGH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. BROWN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I spoke with 95 little 3-year-olds in my district. Tonight, I rise on their behalf.

The school lunch program has worked well since 1946—it's not broken. America's children are our most important resource for the future.

Studies show that if a child is hungry, taxpayer dollars for education are wasted because when kids are hungry they can't learn. According to the Children's Defense Fund, millions of children will go hungry by cutting funds for school lunches, food stamps, child care, Head Start meals, and WIC programs. Republican double-talk says "cuts to school lunches" aren't "cuts," but block grants to States. That deceives the American people. As a 10-

year veteran of the Florida legislature, I can tell you that sending Federal dollars to the States as block grants does not ensure that these funds will go to child nutrition programs.

This school lunch program began after the start of World War II when young men tried to enlist in the military and were rejected because they were malnourished and couldn't pass the physical. President Truman wisely determined that producing healthy youngsters was in the national interest. It still is today.

Congress should not be cutting child nutrition and child care. These cuts take food out of the mouths of hungry children. No big federally subsidized defense contractor has seen a dime threatened. No wealthy individual has seen his special tax breaks cut. In fact, the reason they're making all these cuts is so that the wealthy can get additional capital gains benefits on the backs of suffering children.

Republicans seem to think they can fool some of the people, some of the time. But you can't fool all of the people all of the time. The Contract on America is a contract on children, the elderly, veterans and the hardest working Americans.

The school lunch program works, it feeds hungry children. As the saying goes, "If it's not broke, don't fix it."

### IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to commend the gentlewoman from North Carolina for the special order.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise in support of America's children because the Contract With America is an all-out assault on America's children.

Last week, in this Chamber's Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, the former Education and Labor Committee, I offered two key amendments which will would have protected the most vulnerable members of our society.

One of my amendments would continue to guarantee free meals to children who are under 130 percent of poverty which was repealed in H.R. 999, the Welfare Reform Consolidation Act. My amendment was unilaterally defeated by the Republican supporters of the so-called "contract".

Restoring free meals for children at or below 130 percent of poverty would have continued a policy set in 1974 to help protect the health and well-being of low-income children. The Republican plan as detailed in H.R. 999 will curtail access to the main source of nutrition for some youngsters. Overall funding for the school-based block grant will be capped at a 4.5 percent rate of increase per year.

Under the current law, the rate of increase for fiscal year 1996 would be 5.2 percent, which is still not enough to meet current needs. It is unbelievable that we would risk letting children go hungry in this country under the cloak of fiscal responsibility. And I do not think that most Americans want to shred a critical safety net for children and infants.

If this proposal becomes law, it will be left up to the States or school district to decide whether or not to provide any free meals at all; States will not be required to serve meals to children who cannot afford to pay for them we know that hungry children cannot learn, because hunger impairs their ability to learn.

At a time when much lip service is given to improving education through the use of high-technology learning along the information superhighway, it seems very contradictory to take away such basics as the school lunch program.

I think every American should have deep concerns about what the termination of funding for feeding programs for children says about the direction this Nation is heading.

These are children who did not choose or ask to be born into a situation of poverty. These are children who cannot approach the legislators and legislatures, to let the folks who are making the decisions know that these policies are harmful and damaging to them. And these policies punish them for circumstances over which they have no control. Americans have always been proud of our spirit of concern for one another and compassion for people who are less fortunate than we are.

Has that been wiped out by the Contract With America?

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON].

Mrs. CLAYTON. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Just to remind the audience, these are faces of real people. Mr. Speaker, I believe tonight the case has been made against H.R. 4, particularly the case of the provision to eliminate nutritional programs. We are more than Members of Congress, Mr. Speaker. We are actually public servants and we must remember that our first responsibility is not to the parties that we are members of but to the people we represent.

At the end of each day, Mr. Speaker, we must be honest with the facts, who have we helped and who have we harmed. Have we helped the few or have we helped the many?

I think President Kennedy had it right 34 years ago when he stated, "A country that cannot help the many who are poor cannot protect the few who are rich." No party or no person has an exclusive on family values and personal responsibility. Those are standards that each of us hold absolutely dear.